

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-7, 13-18, 26, 27, 28, 31, and 34 have been amended to clarify the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claims 1-34 are pending.

### ***Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103***

Claims 1-7, 13-18, 26, 27, 28, 31, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sha, Sutoh, and Natarajan. Sha discloses an automatic protection switch decision engine, where the decision engine decides whether to assign a service line to be active or in standby mode. Sutoh discloses a hitless switching system and transmission apparatus, where the system divides a signal to be transmitted into a plurality of signals and sending the signals over a plurality of transmission lines with redundancy. Natarajan discloses a system supporting variable rates and multiple protocols. However, neither Sha, Sutoh, and Natarajan teach nor disclose either separately or in combination:

“connecting the traffic input to the link interface of ~~through~~ the first physical module through a pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through a[[ny]] link layer framer of the second physical module but is processed through the link layer framer of the first physical module,” as claim 1 now recites.

Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found without limitation in Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5. Similar configurations are claimed in claims 13, 26, 27, 28, 31, and 34, wherein different physical modules are utilized to provide alternate communication path with, however, using the same queue hardware to minimize data continuity problems on switching between a main path and the alternate path even though the queue hardware resides on a specific physical module.

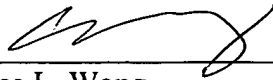
Claims 2-12 and 14-25 and 32-33 depend from claims 1, 13, and 31 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

The foregoing amendments are not to be taken as an admission of unpatentability of any of the claims prior to the amendments.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested based on the preceding remarks. If at any time the Examiner believes that an interview would be helpful, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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